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DOES EXPOSURE TO SECOND-HAND SMOKE IMPAIR EVERYDAY MEMORY?

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Introduction: Exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS) has a detrimental impact on health and may lead to deficits in general memory. No research has focused upon whether exposure to SHS affects everyday memory, of which prospective memory (PM: remembering future intentions and activities) is a good example.
Objectives: To explore the links between exposure to SHS and PM.
Aims: This study aims to compare a group of never-smokers who reported regular exposure to second-hand smoke (the SHS group) with a group of current smokers (the CS group) and a group of never-smokers who reported never having been exposed to SHS (the Non-SHS group) on objective PM.
Methods: An existing groups design was employed to compare 24 SHS, 27 CS and 28 Non-SHS on The Cambridge Prospective Memory Test (CAMPROMPT) which measures time and event based PM. Age, other drug use, mood and IQ were also measured as covariates in the study.
Results: The Non-SHS group recalled significantly more PM items on CAMPROMPT than both the SHS and CS groups, with the SHS group recalling significantly more items than the CS group. This was found after controlling for important covariates.
Conclusions: This is the first study to observe PM deficits in non-smokers exposed to SHS. It is concluded that exposure to other people's SHS can impede everyday memory, but not to the same degree as found in active (current) smokers, when both groups are compared to non-smokers not exposed to SHS.

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